First Congregational
United Church of Christ

111 S. Wallace Blvd. Ypsilanti, MI 48197
(Mailing Address: P.O. Box 980413 Ypsilanti, MI 48198)
www.ypsiucc.org

An open and affirming community committed to peace and justice

February 19, 2023
10:00 am
Transfiguration Sunday

“Dazzling Reign”

No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey,
You are welcome here!

WORSHIP ON ZOOM -- Zoom opens at 9:30 am Sunday morning.

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7643282234

Meeting ID: 764 328 2234
Passcode: Ypsi1882
To join by phone, dial the number, 1-312-626-6799

- Welcome to Ypsilanti First Congregational UCC's Hybrid Worship Service
- Hymns are included in the worship bulletin. A separate hymnal is not needed.
- If you are joining worship for the first-time on Zoom, please add your name and email to the chat so the Zoomie Greeter can introduce you.
- Thank you for choosing to worship with us today!

OPEN AND AFFIRMING COVENANT OF
First Congregational United Church of Christ, Ypsilanti

First Congregational United Church of Christ, Ypsilanti celebrates everyone, including people of all ages, races, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identifies and expressions, family configurations, economic circumstances, physical, cognitive or emotional abilities, education or spiritual or religious traditions. All are welcome to participate fully in the life, leadership, ministry, and missions of this church as we seek to grow together in a safe, nurturing community of faith. We strive to demonstrate in all ways that "NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE OR WHERE YOU ARE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY, YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!"

a just
world
for all
ucc.org

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP

PRELUDE *Start Zoom Recoding to Cloud **VISHNU SRINIAS**

"Serenade to Sweden" By, Duke Ellington

RINGING THE BELL **MARGARET HARNER**

WELCOME **PASTOR LIZ**

- A warm welcome to all, including first-time visitors.
- As stated in our Open and Affirming Covenant (previous page), all persons are welcome in this community of faith.

ANNOUNCEMENTS **PASTOR LIZ**

- **COMMUNITY SHARING OF OTHER ANNOUNCMENTS:**
  - Worship Leader this morning is Patty Sherwood.
  - The Greeters are Jeanette Sherrill (Zoomie) and Margaret Harner (Roomie).
  - Please share your announcements so everyone can learn what is happening in our beloved ministry community.
  - Please submit written announcements to Margaret Harner, Worship Coordinator, margaretsharner@gmail.com, by midnight on Tuesday.

GATHERING TO WORSHIP

GATHERING HYMN *Microphone muted Standing or seated, optional **ELIZABETH MITCHELL**

"Every Time I Feel the Spirit"
282 NCH

CALL TO WORSHIP *Responsive **PATTY SHERWOOD**

Leader: On the mountaintops of wonder and delight, we wait-

People: For God's amazing grace to transform our lives.

Leader: In the valleys of everyday life, we wait-

People: Willing to wait to simply be in God's presence.

Leader**:** In the midst of misguided living, we wait,

People: **For the one who comes to lead us down the paths of humility.**

HYMN *Microphone muted Standing or seated optional **ELIZABETH MITCHELL**

"We Have at Christ's Own Bidding"
182 NCH

LISTENING FOR GOD

FIRST READING **Exodus 24;12-18** **PATTY SHERWOOD**
2 Peter 1:16-21

SECOND READING **Matthew 17:1-9** **PASTOR LIZ**

HYMN *Microphone muted Standing or seated optional

"For the Beauty of the Earth"
28 NCH

MORNING MESSAGE **"Dazzling Reign"** **PASTOR LIZ**

CONVERSING WITH THE HOLY ONE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE *Pause Zoom recording
*Zoomies: Please turn on your microphone

You are invited to share your joys and petitions for prayer.
Please unmute your microphone to share a joy or make a prayer of petition.
At the end of each joy or petition, please say **"God in your mercy"**
We will respond (with microphones muted) **"Hear our prayers"**

PASTORAL PRAYER *Restart Zoom recording **PASTOR LIZ**

DISCIPLES' PRAYER *Unison with microphone muted **PASTOR LIZ**

God of mountaintops,
The din of the world can harden our hearts to your Word.
We watch news, reality TV, silly sitcoms, yet have trouble bearing witness
to your presence in our lives.
Our faith is placed in those who fail us.
Our trust is given to those who misplace it.
Forgive us, O God.
We hear your offer of mercy, calling us to discipleship.
You whisper our names, so we know how loved we are.
Caught by the surprise of your never-ending love for us,
How can we not follow Jesus onto the mountaintops of worship
and into the valleys of sacrifice and service.
Amen.

OFFERING

INVITATION TO OFFERING **PASTOR LIZ**

Leader: We give to express thanks for the abundant goodness of our God.
We devote our offerings to passing on the teachings of Jesus.
We commit our lives to following the radical Jesus.

Our electronic giving platform is Tithe.ly: Link to Tithe.ly

Please place in-person offerings in the gold offeringplace on the table by the door.

Checks can be mailed to:
First Congregational United Church of Christ
PO Box 980413, Ypsilanti, MI 48198

Thank you for your generosity!

OFFERTORY **"Call Me Up Some Rainy Afternoon"** **VISHNU SRININAS**
By, Irving Berlin

DOXOLOGY *Microphone muted Standing or seated optional **ELIZABETH MITCHELL**

"Take My Gifts" v,2, 562 NCH

Take the fruits that I have gathered from the tree your Spirit sowed,
Harvest of your own compassion, juice that makes the wine of God,
Spiced with humor, laced with laughter, flavor of the Jesus life,
Tang of risk and new adventure, taste and zest beyond belief

PRAYER OF DEDICATION *Unison with Microphone muted **PATTY SHERWOOD**

Faithful God, we commit our spirits, our substance, our plans.
We offer the best we have to give in thanks for your abiding love.
We come willing to share our time, not just the wealth.
Receive our energies and creativity, not just the leftovers from our busy days.
Let your church become more fully a beacon of hope in our needy world.
Amen.

DEPARTING WITH PRAISE

CLOSING HYMN *Microphone muted *Standing optional **ELIZABETH MITCHELL**

"My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less"
403 NCH

BENEDICTION **PASTOR LIZ**

Leader: May the shining radiance of God inspire you.
May you come up to the mountaintop.
May you remember the experience with wonder and awe.
And may you come down renewed and empowered to be the hope of the world

POSTLUDE Please be seated **VISHNU SRINIVAS**
"Gravy Waltz" By Oscar Peterson

PASSING THE PEACE **FRIENDS GATHERED**

*Save Zoom Recording to Cloud (click "yes")

- Share a greeting with others as we transition to our casual **Friendship Time.**

Zoom Only Sunday Worship 10:00 am

Rev. Liz Larrivee, Pastor & Spiritual Director
Tiffanie Waldron, Music Director
Vishnu Srinivas, Accompanist

Jenn Zibbell, MID Ministry Intern
Patty Sherwood, Worship Leader
Margaret Harner, Usher & Bell Ringer
Elizabeth Mitchell, Guest Vocalist

YPSILANTI FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Worship Address:
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ATTRIBUTIONS FOR TODAY'S BULLETIN

- **Cover Art:** Joshua Lanzarini in *Unsplash*
- **Call to Worship/Disciples' Prayer:** Thom Shuman, *Playing Hopscotch in Heaven* (adapted)
- **Prayer of Dedication:** Lavon Baylor, *Taught By Love.* (adapted)
- **Benediction:** United Church of Christ, *Worship Ways*

Cover photo: The Church of the Transfiguration is a Franciscan church located on Mount Tabor in Israel. It is traditionally believed to be the site where the Transfiguration of Jesus took place

ANNOUNCEMENTS

For pastoral care needs and/or emergencies, please call or text Pastor Liz, 734-358-6108.

Worship Next Week: Worship Leader, Jeanette Sherrill; Greeters, Patty Sherwood (Roomie) and (Zoomie).

The Annual Meeting of Ypsilanti First Congregational UCC is TODAY immediately following our worship service. The meeting will be hybrid and we encourage EVERYONE to stay for the meeting. The budget for 2023 will be presented.

Running from Empty-Lenten Devotionals 2023 by the writers of *Still Speaking Writers Group* are available in either print or digital form. Print copies are on the table at the back of the sanctuary and a digital link is available by contacting Margaret Harner at margaretsharner@gmail.com

A Hybrid (Zoom & In-Person) Celebration of Life for Daniel J. Long will be held on March 11 at 2:00 pm at 111 S. Wallace Blvd, Ypsilanti, MI 48197 (former Chapelle Elementary School) and via the church Zoom (Meeting ID 764 328 2234)**.** All are welcome.

Weekly Ypsi UCC Community Discernment Gatherings meet on Mondays at 7:00 pm on Zoom.

"These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God." I Corinthians 2:10

"There is a sweet spot between the known and the unknown where originality happens; the key is to be able to linger there without panicking." Ed Catmull, Pixar

Our next meeting is on Feb 20 at 7:00 pm on the church Zoom. Our homework assignment is to complete Best Practice website research and bring at least one example of a church's mission, vision, and values statements that best meets the criteria in Pastor Liz's follow up PDF and that resonates with you personally to screen share with the rest of the group. If you cannot attend this gathering, please submit your homework example to Pastor Liz via email by noon on Monday so she can screen share it for group discussion. Due to the Monthly Worship Team Meeting schedule**, there will not be a Community Discernment Gathering held on Mar 13**, Apr 10, May 8, Jun 12, Jul 10, Aug 14, Sept 11, Oct 9, Nov 13, or Dec 11.)

"Engaging Christian Contemplation Practices" Vitality Grant seminar continues to meet bi-weekly on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm through the UCC Southern New England Conference Center for Leadership Development. **Remaining dates are March 1**, March 15, and March 29. We are learning new ways to relax into God's presence while trusting the Spirit to guide us in discerning God's Still Speaking voice.

The Worship Team will meet on the 2nd Monday of each month at 6:30 pm via Zoom. Our next meeting will be Monday, March 13. The remaining 2023 Worship Team Meeting dates are Apr 10, May 8, Jun 12, Jul 10, Aug 14, Sept 11, Oct 9, Nov 13, and Dec 11.

Patrick O'Brien continues to reside at Regency at Canton. He appreciates visits, cards & phone calls. His room is #134 (Bed 2), telephone 734-355-9076: address – 45900 Geddes Rd., Canton, MI 48188

Chris Hale has returned home following her recent hospitalization to continue her recovery.

Please continue to keep both Patrick and Chris in prayer.

A letter to the Michigan Conference from Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel, Michigan Conference Minister

After the Shooting at Michigan State University

This Valentines Day, I do not send our 140 Michigan churches the sugary sentiments of a heart shaped box of chocolates but the prayers from my broken human heart after last night's shooting at Michigan State University. We had church members who could see the scene from where they were locked down in homes and churches. Last night, as I checked in on our local pastors, I knew they were checking in on their churches, communities, families, workers, students, first responders and the weary world around them.

For, as every pastor knows, when tragedy hits, our churches grow much larger than the membership rolls. Churches become centers of care for the whole community, in buildings at busy intersections, in online gatherings, or on prayer chains. When violence locks us down or sends us into the streets, the church has the chance to blast past its walls, when preachers realize that their most important sermon may be the one that is offered to the stranger at the grocery store who recognizes them and says, "Pastor, just answer me this. How can God let this happen?"

I've heard that question a lot lately, from people horrified by whatever picture of the world they receive in the news of their own choosing, but it's a question that we in the church have an ancient answer to. God does not let this happen. People do. It is people who let these things happen.

We saw it in the video of Tyre Nichols, killed by the brutality of human violence and the more devastating brutality of human indifference. We see it in the horror of the war in Ukraine, where, as in all wars, the poor pay the greatest price, while far away leaders philosophize to monetize their own safety. We see it in ourselves as a country, when the news of one school shooting after another becomes routine, in a culture drooling for violence as entertainment, but hardened to it in real life. We see it in ourselves as a nation of immature impulses and short attention spans, more interested in shooting balloons out of the sky than taking guns out of the hands of its own people. God does not allow that to happen. People do.

Yet somehow, despite the stakes, God, the great creator of all things, chose to create us with free will and mortal bodies. We could have been made to live forever as coddled infants, with our needs met, our decisions constrained and our capacity to harm the rest of creation minimized. Instead, we were created in the image of God, which means we have souls and bodies that were literally built for growth and change. Created with a limited time on earth, we were given the ability to choose between right and wrong, love or death, God or stuff, the care of all creation or the tedious worship of the self, all on a short journey through life whose purpose is to draw us closer to the one who gave us life to begin with.

As for the shooting in East Lansing, God does not let this happen. People do. It is God's people who let the worst things happen to ourselves and to one another, from the violent act of taking lives, to the violent inaction of cynical indifference. But it is also God's people who allow the most beautiful things to happen, from the courageous saving of lives, to the loving healing of broken spirits, to the humble repairing of the world from our own mistakes. This is what it means to follow Jesus, human and divine. Today, our Michigan pastors and churches are at the beating heart of it all.

Peace and Blessings,
The Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel

Black History Month: February is National Black History month. The February 5th bulletin contained the *Executive Summary of 2023 Black History Theme: Black Resistance,* written by **ASALH** (Association for the Study of African American Live and History, Washington, D.C. The stated mission of ASALH *is to promote, research, preserve, interpret, and disseminate information about Black life, history and culture to the global community*. There website is: asalh.org

Last week's bulletin, February 12th, referenced contributions and milestones during the early 1900's of black Michiganders in Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor and Whittaker from the *Michigan Manual of Freedmen's Progress.* Several Ypsilanti sites were critical to the Underground Railroad.

This week, you will find excerpts from *Africa Before Transatlantic Enslavement* from **B:M2023**

https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/article/section/history-of-slavery/africa-before-

"Kemet, Ancient Egypt, for example, one of the most notable of the early African civilizations, which first developed in the Nile valley over 5000 years ago. However, even before the rise of Kemet it seems likely that an even more ancient kingdom, known as Ta Seti, existed in what is today Nubia in Sudan. This may well have been the earliest state to exist anywhere in the world. Africa can therefore be credited not only with giving rise to the many scientific developments associated with Egypt, engineering, mathematics, architecture, medicine etc but also with important early political developments such as state formation and monarchy. This demonstrates that economic and political development, as well as scientific development was, during this early period, perhaps more advanced in Africa than in other continents.

The African continent continued on its own path of development, without significant external intervention until the fifteenth century of our era. Some of the world's other great civilisations, such

as Kush, Axum, Mali, and Great Zimbabwe, flourished in Africa in the years before 1500. In this early period Africans participated in extensive international trading networks and in trans-oceanic travel. Certainly some African states had established important trading relations with India, China and other parts of Asia long before these were disrupted by European intervention.

A North African conquest of the Iberian peninsular began in the 8th century and led to the occupation of much of Spain and Portugal for several centuries. This Muslim invasion re-introduced much of the knowledge of the ancient world to Europe and linked it much more closely with North and West Africa. It was gold from the great empires of West Africa, such as Ghana, Mali and Songhay, which provided the means for the economic take off of Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries and aroused the interest of Europeans in western Africa. Indeed, it was the wealth of West Africa, especially as a source of gold, that encouraged the voyages of the early European explorers.

By the 15th century the African continent was already one of great of diversity. The existence of great kingdoms and empires, such as Mali in the west and Ethiopia in the east were in many ways exceptional rather than typical. In many parts of the continent no major centralized states existed and many people lived in societies where there were no great divisions of wealth and power. In such societies there were generally more democratic systems of government by councils of elders and other kinship and age-based institutions. As a consequence, there was also a diversity of religious and philosophical beliefs. In many areas these beliefs remained traditional and stressed the importance of communing with common ancestors. The Ethiopian kingdom was unusual because the Orthodox Christian church, which was of ancient origin in that region, had increasingly important state functions. In Mali, and in some other areas of western and eastern Africa, as well as in throughout North Africa, Islam had already begun to play a significant role before 1500. Most importantly African societies were following their own patterns of development before the onset of European intervention."

Early achievements: "We now know that, far from Africa having no history, it is almost certain that human history actually began there. All the earliest evidence of human existence and of our immediate hominid ancestors has been found in Africa. The latest scientific research points to the fact that all human beings are likely to have African ancestors.

Africa was not just the birthplace of humanity but also the cradle of early civilizations that made an immense contribution to the world and are still marveled at today. The most notable example is Kemet – the original name of ancient Egypt – which first developed in the Nile valley more than 5,000 years ago and was one of the first monarchies.

However, even before the rise of Egypt, an even earlier kingdom was founded in Nubia, in what is present-day Sudan. Ta Seti is thought to be one of the earliest states in history, the existence of which demonstrates that, thousands of years ago, Africans were developing some of the most advanced political systems anywhere in the world."

The rise of Islam: "The continent progressed on its own path of development without major external intervention apart from the Arab invasions of North Africa that began after the rise of Islam in the mid-7th century. Those invasions and the introduction of Islam served to integrate North Africa, as well as parts of East and West Africa, more fully into the Muslim-dominated trading system of that period and generally enhanced the local, regional and international trading networks that were already developing throughout the continent.

Although sometimes spread by military means, Islam's expansion was often facilitated by trade and the desire of African rulers to utilize Islamic political and economic institutions. The Arabic language also provided a script that assisted the development of literacy, book-based learning and record-keeping.

The empire of Songhay – which stretched from modern-day Mali to Sudan –was known for, among other things, the famous Islamic university of Sankoré based in Timbuktu, which was established in the 14th century. The works of the Greek philosopher Aristotle were studied there, as well as subjects such as law, various branches of philosophy, dialectics, grammar, rhetoric and astronomy. In the 16th century, one of its most famous scholars, Ahmed Baba (1564–1627), is said to have written more than 40 major books on such subjects as astronomy, history and theology and had a private library that held over 1,500 volumes.

One of the first reports of Timbuktu to reach Europe was by the North African diplomat and author Leo Africanus. In his book Description of Africa, published in 1550, he says of the town: 'There you will find many judges, professors and devout men, all handsomely maintained by the king, who holds scholars in much honor. There, too, they sell many handwritten North African books, and more profit is to be made there from the sale of books than from any other branch of trade."

Traditional societies: "In the centuries before 1500, some of the world's other great civilisations, such as Kush (in present-day Sudan), Axum (in present-day Ethiopia) and Great Zimbabwe, flourished in Africa.

However, although the history of the continent before the transatlantic slave trade is often viewed as one of great empires and kingdoms, many of its inhabitants lived in societies with no great state apparatus. They were often governed by councils of elders or by other kinship- or age-based institutions. Religious and philosophical beliefs concentrated on maintaining communication with ancestors who could intercede with gods on behalf of the living and ensure the smooth functioning of society. (The Ethiopian kingdom was unusual because there the orthodox Christian Church, which was of ancient origin, performed increasingly important state functions.)

Many of these societies were small scale, occupied with farming, herding and producing enough from agriculture to survive and exchange in local markets. They could also be part of larger empires and, as such, were expected to produce a surplus or perform other duties for an overlord. In short, while these societies varied greatly and were governed in different ways, they were all developing according to their own internal dynamics.

The Igbo people, who still live in Nigeria, are an example of a society that was not part of a centralised state. They ruled themselves in village communities that, at different times, used slightly different political systems. As in many other African societies that used similar methods, everyone was taught rules and responsibilities according to age and groupings – men or women together in age sets – that cut across family or village loyalty. Sometimes the extended family was responsible for organising and training people and for liaising with other similar extended family groups, through councils of elders or elected chiefs. Therefore, relationships based on age and kinship were often very important.

Even societies that had kings and more centralized political structures also used these other political institutions and ways of organizing people. What is important about them is that they involved many people in decision-making and, in this respect, were African forms of participatory democracy. Religious ideas generally supported and underpinned these systems of government, most importantly giving people their own specific ways of understanding the world and the rules of their own society.

Much more information is available on the website.

Hope Clinic Golf Classic: Trinity Health colleagues of Dan Kidder-McQuown from the night shift have organized a golf fund-raiser for Hope Clinic. Located in Ypsilanit and serving the Ypsilanti community.

> **Hope Clinic** provides integrated care for the uninsured, all for free. We believe that being health care providers means more than curing illnesses. True health is physical, mental, *and* spiritual. True health care must address all three, every time. We call this Whole-Person Care, and nobody does it but Hope Clinic, *your haven of help + healing, providing* ***free medical, dental, food, and behavioral health****, caring for the Whole Person in Jesus' Name.*
>
> Hope Clinic Mission Statement

282 Every Time I Feel the Spirit

2 Sam. 22:9; Ps. 18:8

African-American spiritual

Refrain

Ev - ery time I feel the Spir - it mov-ing in my heart I will pray. Yes, ev - ery time I feel the Spir - it mov - ing in my heart I will pray.

Last time, end

1 Up - on the moun - tain my God spoke, out of God's mouth came fire and smoke. Looked all a - round me; looked so fine; I asked my God if all were mine.

2 Oh, Jor-dan riv - er, chil - ly and cold, it chills the bod - y, not the soul. There's on - ly one train on this track; it runs to heav - en, then right back.

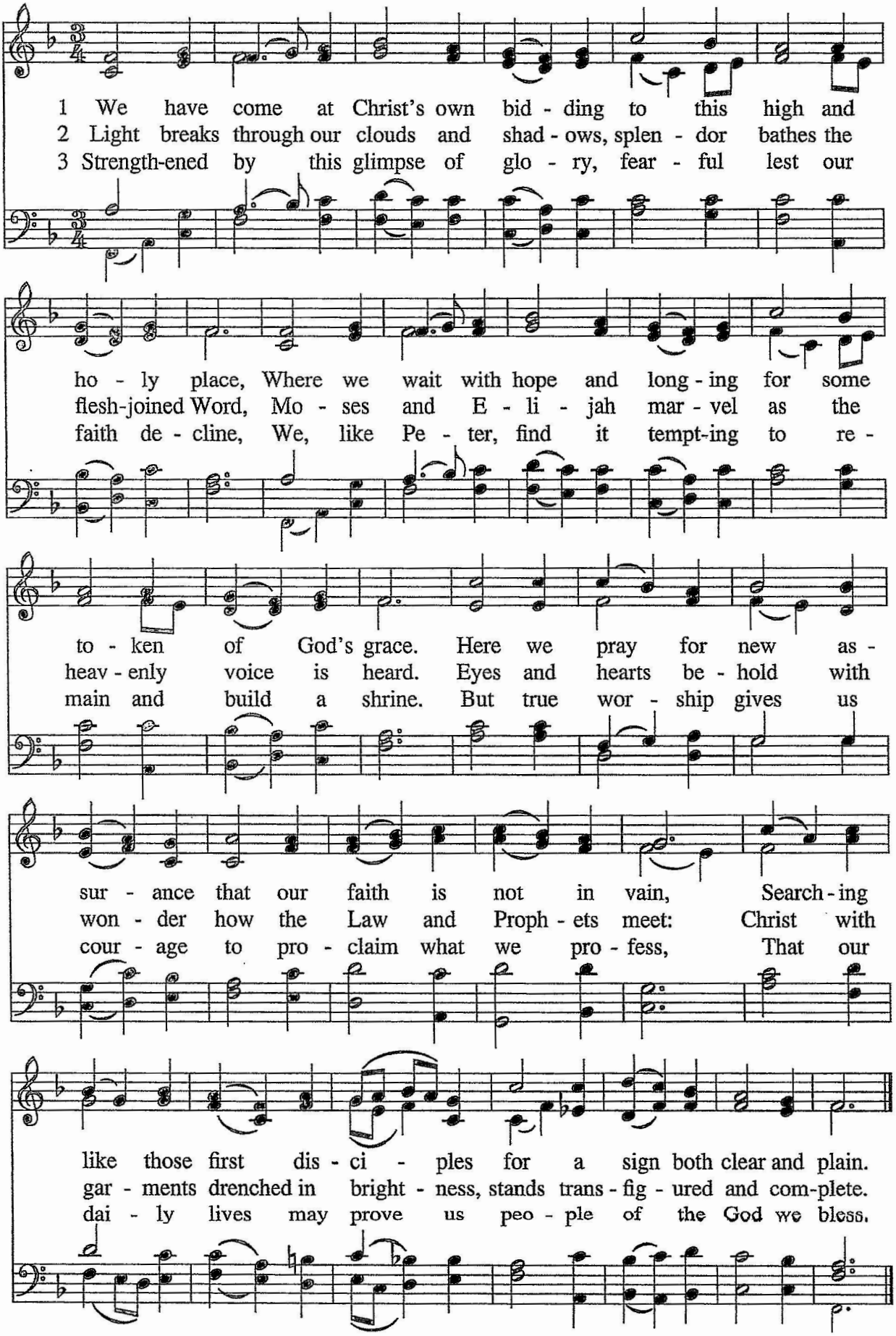
to Refrain

Among the thousands of spirituals that exist today are songs of gladness and songs of sorrow. This well-known spiritual is a song of joy, captured not only in the words, but in the lively rhythms.

Tune: African-American spiritual
Arr. Joyce Finch Johnson, 1992

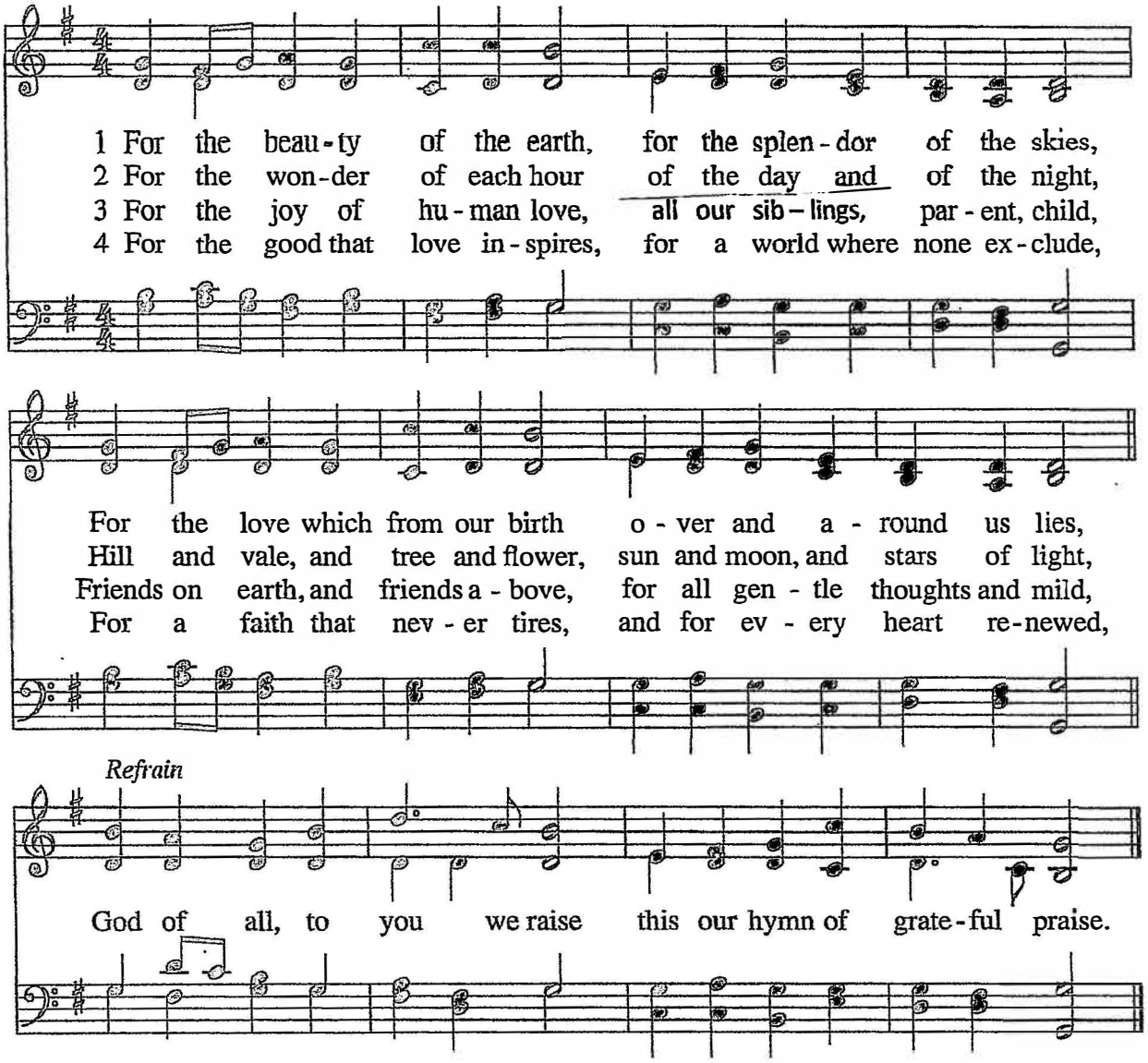
182 We Have Come at Christ's Own Bidding

Matt. 17:1–8; Mark 9:2–8; Luke 9:28–36 *Carl P. Daw, Jr., 1988*



28 For the Beauty of the Earth

St. 1–3, Folliott S. Pierpoint, 1864; alt.
St. 4, Miriam Therese Winter, 1993



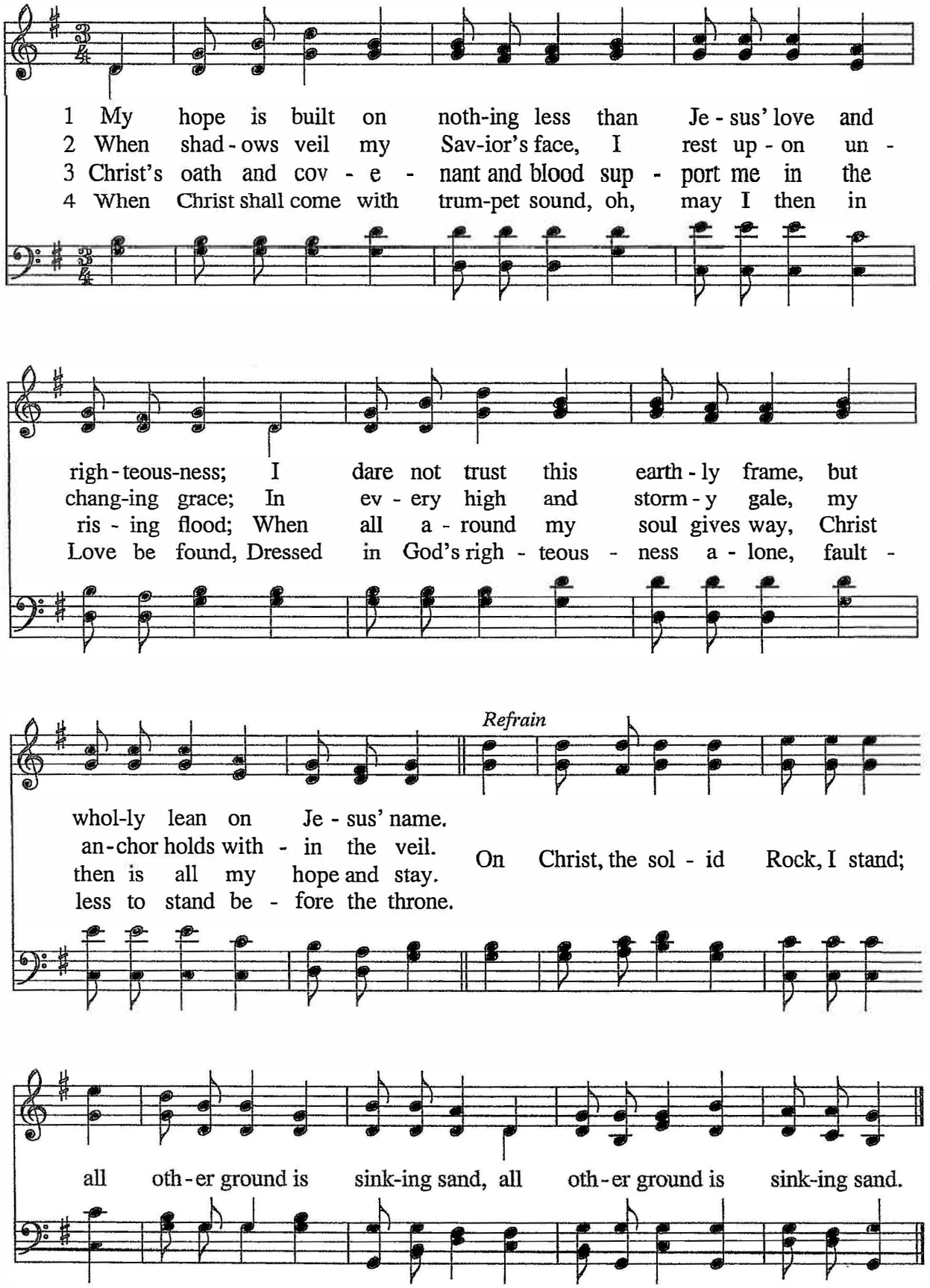
Folliott S. Pierpoint, author of numerous hymns, penned these verses near his native city of Bath, England, on a late spring day when flowers were in full bloom and all the earth seemed to rejoice.

Tune: DIX 7.7.7.7. with refrain
Conrad Kocher, 1838
Adapt. William H. Monk, 1861

403 My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

Matt. 7:24–27; 1 Cor. 3:11; Heb. 6:19; Rev. 11:15

Edward Mote, c. 1834; alt.



William Bradbury met great success by composing hymn tunes and religious songs in a lively, popular style. He also helped establish music programs in New York public schools, served a church, and co-founded a piano company.

Tune: SOLID ROCK L.M. with refrain
William B. Bradbury, 1863